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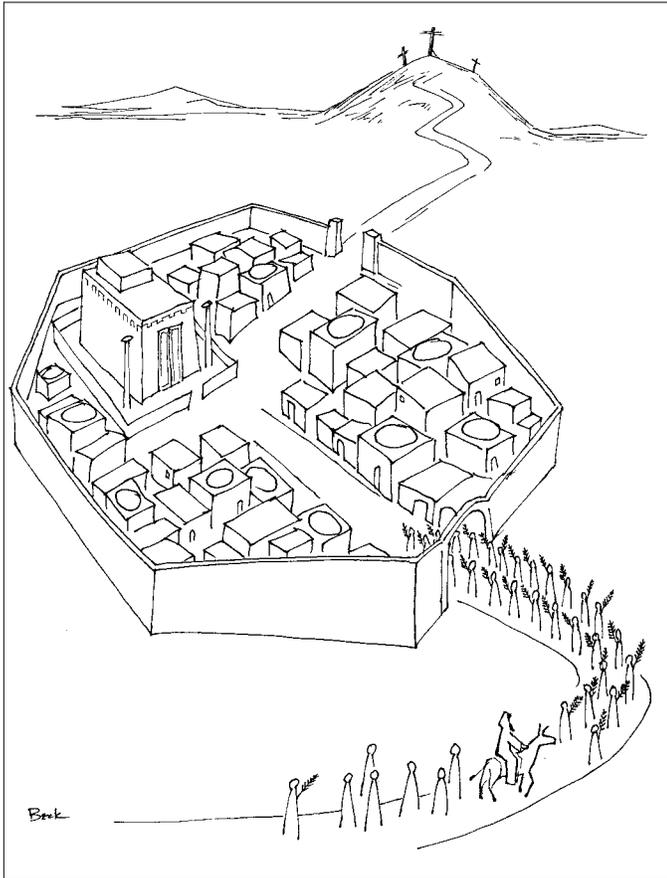
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ENTERING THE SCENE:

We begin by parading in singing our Hosanna's (which means "save, we ask"), and shortly find ourselves yelling with the crowd "crucify him"! Something goes terribly wrong. Eventually, most of us scatter for our very lives, leaving just a few that loved the man Jesus, *hanging there* under the angry sky. It seems like those who just love the man, are able to hang in there with him: those who *hang their hopes* on what the man could do for them; abandon him. All their projections died on the cross with Jesus, leaving them without earthly hopes. But the story isn't over yet. Death does not always have the last word. This is not the end of the story. Something too wonder filled is about to break into space and time. RESURRECTION!!!

Palm Sunday: Short Form Mt. 27:11-54

11 Meanwhile **Jesus** stood before the **governor**, and the **governor** asked him, "Are you the **king of the Jews**?" "Yes, it is as you say," **Jesus** replied. 12 When he was accused by the **chief priests** and the **elders**, he gave no answer. 13 Then **Pilate** asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" 14 But **Jesus** made no reply, not even to a single charge--to the great amazement of the

governor. 15 Now it was the **governor's** custom at the Feast to release a **prisoner** chosen by the crowd. 16 At that time they had a notorious **prisoner**, called **Barabbas**. 17 So when the crowd had gathered, **Pilate** asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: **Barabbas**, or **Jesus** who is called **Christ**?" 18 For he knew it was out of envy that they handed **Jesus** over to him. 19 While **Pilate** was sitting on the judge's seat, his **wife** sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that **innocent man**, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."



CHRIST BEFORE PILATE above, is from the Vatican Collection. It was painted by Pietro Lorenzetti (Siena c. 1280-1348). It is tempera on panel.

The Vatican Collections: The Papacy and Art. NY. Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Pub. 1982. Page 138. www.vatican.va

20 But the **chief priests** and the **elders** persuaded the **crowd** to ask for **Barabbas** and to have **Jesus** **executed**. 21 Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the **governor**. "**Barabbas**," they answered. 22 What shall I do, then, with **Jesus** who is called **Christ**?" **Pilate** asked. They all answered, "**Crucify him!**" 23 Why? What **crime** has he committed?" asked **Pilate**. But they shouted all the louder, "**Crucify him!**" 24 When **Pilate** saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and **washed his hands** in front of the **crowd**. "I am **innocent of this man's blood**," he said. "It is your responsibility!" 25 All the **people** answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our **children!**"

26 Then he released **Barabbas** to them. But he had **Jesus** **flogged**, and handed him over to be **crucified**.

27 Then the **governor's** **soldiers** took **Jesus** into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of **soldiers** around him. 28 They **stripped** him and put a scarlet **robe** on him, 29 and then **twisted** together a **crown** of thorns and set it on his head. They put a **staff** in his right hand and knelt in front

of him and **mocked** him. "Hail, **king of the Jews!**" they said. 30 They **spit** on him, and took the **staff** and **struck** him on the head again and again. 31 After they had **mocked** him, they took off the **robe** and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to **crucify** him.

32 As they were going out, they met a man from **Cyrene**, named **Simon**, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33 They came to a place called **Golgotha** (which means The Place of the Skull). 34 There they offered **Jesus** wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. 35 When they had **crucified** him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36 And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37 Above his head they placed the written charge against him: **THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS**. 38 Two **robbers** were **crucified** with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39 Those who passed by hurled **insults** at him, shaking their heads 40 and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! **Come down** from the cross, if you are the **Son of God!**"

41 In the same way the **chief priests**, the **teachers of the law** and the **elders mocked** him. 42 He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the **King of Israel!** Let him **come down** now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43 He trusts in **God**. Let **God** rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the **Son of God.**'" 44 In the same way the **robbers** who were **crucified** with him also heaped **insults** on him. 45 From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land. 46 About the ninth hour **Jesus** cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"--which means, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**" 47 When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling **Elijah.**" 48

Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a stick, and offered it to **Jesus** to drink. 49 The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if **Elijah** comes to save him." 50 And when **Jesus** had cried out again in a loud voice, he **gave up his spirit**. 51 At that moment the curtain of the **temple** was torn in two from top to bottom. The **earth** shook and the rocks split. 52 The **tombs** broke open and the bodies of many holy **people who had died** were **raised** to life. 53 They came out of the **tombs**, and after **Jesus' resurrection** they went into the **holy city** and appeared to many **people**. 54 When the **centurion** and those with him who were guarding **Jesus** saw the **earthquake** and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the **Son of God!**"



DISCUSSION QUESTION: Even Jesus felt abandoned by God as he hung on the cross. Have you ever felt that same abandonment while “hanging on your cross”? If so, how does this awareness help you?

PRAYER: Lord, for a while you felt the abandonment of any felt presence of the father. I find something strangely comforting in knowing this. You truly shared my human condition to the fullest. But you “hung in there” and God’s presence enabled you to hand over your spirit in the trust of God’s promise of resurrection. Help me to also hang in there, trusting that same promise. Amen.

CHRIST BEFORE ANNAS & DENIAL OF ST. PETER: (1303-5) Duccio: Siena; Museo dell' opera del Duomo. Brown, Stephanie. Religious Painting. NY. Mayflower Books. 1979. Page 23.